

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 17355 290844Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 IO-13 /082 W
-----028832 291401Z /41

R 290802Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5843
INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 17355

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID
SUBJECT: SUDOMO WARNS STUDENT ACTIVISTS

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A PROTEST MARCH BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BANDUNG DEC. 27 WHICH CRITICIZED THE ENDORSEMENT FOR RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO BY THE WEST JAVA PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY (DPRD), KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL SUDOMO ISSUED A STERN WARNING TO STUDENTS THAT ALL ACTIONS OF "TAKING TO THE STREETS" WOULD HENCEFORTH BE MET BY STRONG GOVERNMENT MEASURES. TWO STUDENT LEADERS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN ARRESTED IN BANDUNG IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEMONSTRATION. STUDENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN WRANED NOT TO WEAR T-SHIRTS BEARING POLITICAL SLOGANS. SUDOMO'S WARNING IS THE STRONGEST IN A SERIES OCF GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS DESIGNED (SO FAR WITH LITTLE SUCCESS) TO CURTAIL STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISM. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER REPORTING TO THE PRESIDENT ON A PROTEST MARCH STAGED BY BANDUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THE DAY BEFORE, KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL SUDOMO DECEMBER 28 ISSUED A PUBLIC WARNING TO INDONESIAN TUDENTS THAT ALL ACTIONS OF "TAKING TO THE STREETS" FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE MUST BE DISCONTINUED. OTHERWISE, HE SAID, HE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 JAKART 17355 290844Z

"THE NECESSARY STEPS". HE TERMED THE PROTEST MARCH AN ATTEMPT TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT, AND SAID HE HAD URGED THE BANDUNG STUDENTS INVOLVED TO MAKE THAT DEMONSTRATION THE LAST.

3. THE DECEMBER 27 STUDENT MARCH IN BANDUNG FOLLOWED A SMALL DEMONSTRATION THREE DAYS EARLIER IN WHICH 18 STUDENTS

PUT UP POSTERS AT THE WEST JAVA PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY (DPRD) BUILDING CHIDING DPRD MEMBERS FOR THEIR FAILURE TO SPEAK OUT ON PUBLIC ISSUES. WHEN THE DPRD LATER THAT DAY ENDORSED THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND VICE PRESIDENT SULTAN HAMENGKUBUWONO IX, STUDENT LEADERS FROM VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES IN BANDUNG ORGANIZED A LARGER DEMONSTRATION AND RETURNED TO THE DPRD ON THE 27TH 300 STRONG, WITH MANY POSTERS ATTACKING THE DPRD'S ENDORSEMENT OF SUHARTO AS PREMATURE AND NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF WEST JAVA. UNABLE TO MEET WITH DPRD CHAIRMAN, THE STUDENTS MARCHED TO THE BANDUNG INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (ITS) CAMPUS AND DISTRIBUTED LEAFLETS STATING THAT THEIR ACTIONS WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A STUDENT OATH TAKEN OCTOBER 28, WHICH THEY SAID SERVES AS A BASIS FOR THE INDONESIAN STUDENTS' STRUGGLE NOW IN THE FUTURE. THE LEAFLETS WERE CRITICAL OF BOTH THE WEST JAVA DPRD ENDORSEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE ARMED FORCES DEC. 15 STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, TWO STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE BANDUNG MARCH WERE ARRESTED IN THE EARLY HOURS OF DEC. 28. ONE IS SAID TO BE THE STUDENT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN OF BANDUNG ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY AND THE OTHER A STUDENT ACTIVIST FROM ITS.

5. IN HIS DEC. 28 STATEMENT, SUDOMO URGED THE STUDENTS TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JAKART 17355 290844Z

CHANNEL THEIR DIFFERENCES OF OPINION THROUGH RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS PARLIAMENT OR THE PRESS, OR EVEN SEND THEM DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNMENT. CONFRONTATION, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD LEAD TO CLASHES, HE SAID. HE ALSO URGED STUDENTS TO DO AWAY WITH THE USE OF T-SHIRTS BEARING POLITICAL SLOGANS. ENDING ON A LIGHTER NOTE, HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH USE COULD LEAD TO A T-SHIRT WAR WHICH WOULD ONLY BENEFIT THE T-SHIRT MANUFACTURERS.

6. COMMENT: SUDOMO'S WARNING GOT FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN ALL JAKARTA PAPERS DEC. 29 AND WILL BE QUICKLY DISSEMINATED THROUGHOUT THE NATION. AS SUDOMO INDICATED WHEN HE BEGAN HIS REMARKS WITH THE WORDS "I MUST WARN YOU FOR THE UMPTIETH TIME," HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF SIMILAR STATEMENTS IN PAST WEEKS, INCLUDING SOME DIRECTED PARTICULARLY AT THE BANDUNG STUDENTS. ON DEC. 23, THE DAY BEFORE THE FIRST CONFRONTATION WITH THE DPRD, FOR EXAMPLE, WEST JAVA MILITARY REGION COMMANDER MAJ. GEN. HIMAWAN SUTANTO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY "TAKE TO THE STREETS" ACTIONS. THE STUDENTS NEVERTHELESS HAVE CONTINUED TO EXTRACT THE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO TAKE REPRESSIVE

MEASURES. THIS RELUCTANCE WILL DISSIPATE IF STUDENTS
CONTINUE THEIR PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO SUHARTO'S RE-ELECTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977JAKART17355
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780001-0731
Format: TEL
From: JAKARTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977129/aaaaagov.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b136790b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 348559
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUDOMO WARNS STUDENT ACTIVISTS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b136790b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009